

**System and Method for Packaging and Installing
Management Models with Specific Console Interfaces**

RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is related to the following co-pending
5 U.S. Patent Applications filed on the same day as the present
application: "System and Method for Converting Management
Models to Specific Console Interfaces," by Barker, Diller,
Gay, Hedstrom, Persche, Salahshoor, Sweitzer, and Thorpe
(Docket No. RSW920010048US1); "System and Method for Mapping
10 Management Objects to Console Neutral User Interface," by
Barker, Diller, Gay, Hedstrom, Persche, Salahshoor, and Thorpe
(Docket No. RSW920010049US1); "System and Method for Managing
Translatable Strings Displayed on Console Interfaces," by
Barker, Diller, Hedstrom, Persche, Salahshoor, and Thorpe
15 (Docket No. RSW920010050US1); and "System and Method for
Obtaining Display Names from Management Models," by Barker,
Diller, Hedstrom, Persche, Salahshoor, and Thorpe (Docket No.
RSW920010051US1). The present application and each of the
related applications have been assigned to the IBM
20 Corporation.

BACKGROUND

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a system and method for
providing interfaces between management models and system
25 consoles. More particularly, the present invention relates to
a system and method for packaging one or more interfaces
between a generic management model and system consoles and for

installing the packaged interface with one or more system consoles.

Description of the Related Art

5 There is an industry trend toward using standardized software engineering tools and techniques to represent the design of systems to manage real world objects. One such approach is using the Unified Modeling Language (UML) and a derivative of UML called the Common Information Model (CIM).
10 Using UML and CIM, developers can describe a computer information system that is not bound to a particular implementation or platform. CIM includes both a CIM Specification and a CIM Schema and UML is generally used to show the structure of the schemas.
15 The CIM Specification includes a language model, naming conventions, meta schema, and mapping techniques used to map the CIM data to other management models including SNMP, MIBs, DMTF, and MIFs. The CIM Schema includes a set of classes with associations that provide a well understood conceptual
20 framework within which it is possible to organize the available information about the managed environment.

The CIM Schema includes three layers. First, the Core Schema includes an information model that captures notions that are applicable to all areas of management. Second, the
25 Common Schema includes notions that are common to particular management areas but independent of a particular technology or implementation. There are generally five Common Schema areas:

(1) systems, (2) applications, (3) networks, (4) devices, and (5) physical areas. The third CIM Schema layer is the Extension Schema area which includes technology specific extensions of the Common Schema. The Extension Schema area 5 may be specific to a particular operating environment, such as a UNIX operating environment. The Extension Schema may further describe either a specific-general type of environment (i.e., an MS-Windows™ environment, a UNIX-90 environment, etc.), or a product specific operating environment (i.e., 10 Windows 2000 Professional™, IBM AIX version 3.5, etc.).

While CIM includes notations and conventions that are widely agreed upon in industry, a CIM model does not provide information for product development because a CIM model is implementation independent, meaning that a common CIM model 15 can be used as a design starting point to develop systems in a particular operating environment. A CIM model may be stored in a Managed Object Format (MOF) file, which is an ASCII file that includes a formal definition of the CIM Schema. The MOF is used as input to a MOF editor, parser, and compiler. CIM 20 is produced by designers and developers to model a product. The CIM model is then used by others as input to management systems. However, the process of using a CIM model as input to management software is a resource intensive task. A challenge, therefore, with the prior art is the time and 25 resources needed to design a system using CIM and write programs directed towards a particular operating environment.

Management definition objects, such as CIM MOF files, aid in defining a management system, but cannot be readily

deployed in an operating environment. Management definition objects are independent of an operating platform. A challenge, therefore, is packaging the information included in a management definition object in a manner so that it can be used in conjunction with one or more management consoles. What is needed, therefore, is a system and method for packaging a management definition object so that it can be used in conjunction with one or more management consoles. In addition, what is needed is a system and method to include national language translations for display items included with the management definition object. Finally, what is needed is a system and method allowing a customer the ability to select and install a files corresponding to a preferred console from a package along with a preferred national language.

SUMMARY

It has been discovered that a plug-in builder process can be performed using a management definition object, such as a CIM MOF file, to allow objects included in the management definition object to be accessible through a variety of management consoles. A management definition object is evaluated. The results of the evaluation may include one or more panel files that display information pertaining to the product corresponding to the management definition object. In one embodiment, the display panels are prepared in a console-neutral manner so that the same display panel can be displayed from different management consoles. The results of the evaluation may also include the extraction of translatable strings from the management model. The translatable strings are stored in one or more translation template files for translation into various national languages.

The developer selects one or more target consoles. The selected target consoles represent those consoles for which plug-in data is created allowing the target consoles to interface with display information and methods included in the management definition object. Console plug-in data that describes the interfaces used by the selected target consoles is read in order to generate plug-in code that will interface with the selected consoles. The plug-in code, display panels, and national language translations are packaged onto a distributable media that is distributed to customers.

When the customer receives the distributable media, he or she runs a setup program. The setup program allows the user to select one or more management consoles for which plug-in code was generated. The plug-in code corresponding to the 5 customer's selections is registered with the respective management consoles. In this manner, the management consoles can display information, such as display panels and tree nodes, that are included in the management definition object. In addition, processes, such as tasks and methods, included 10 with the plug-in code can be invoked from the management console.

The foregoing is a summary and thus contains, by necessity, simplifications, generalizations, and omissions of detail; consequently, those skilled in the art will appreciate 15 that the summary is illustrative only and is not intended to be in any way limiting. Other aspects, inventive features, and advantages of the present invention, as defined solely by the claims, will become apparent in the non-limiting detailed description set forth below.

TECHNICAL DRAWINGS

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The present invention may be better understood, and its numerous objects, features, and advantages made apparent to those skilled in the art by referencing the accompanying drawings. The use of the same reference symbols in different drawings indicates similar or identical items.

Figure 1 is high level diagram of the overall process of providing console plug in files to customers;

Figure 2 is a high level flowchart showing the overall process of creating distributable media including console plug in files based upon a management definition;

Figure 3 is a flowchart showing the process of creating console plug in files;

Figure 4 is a high level diagram of a code file being transformed into a formatted definition object file including data elements derived from the code file;

Figure 5 is a high level diagram of a console plug in builder being used to generate plug in data for a variety of consoles;

Figure 6 is a flowchart showing the customer installation process for installing plug in code for selected consoles;

Figure 7 is a flowchart showing customer console processes performed after plug in code installation;

Figure 8 is a high level diagram of data layers including a management data layer, a console data layer, and the generated generic integration data layer;

5 **Figure 9** is a high level diagram showing the creation of a GUI display panel from a CIM object file;

Figure 10 is a flowchart showing the processing of management data in order to create a tree view displayable on a console;

10 **Figure 11** is a flowchart showing tree view processing of a simple association found in the management data;

Figure 12 is a flowchart showing processing steps taken to process an individual tree node;

Figure 13 is a diagram showing the process of creating various packaging files to support a management model;

15 **Figure 14** is a high level diagram showing national language support files being translated and packaged into country-specific run time libraries;

20 **Figure 15** is a flowchart showing steps taken to derive display names from information included in the management data file;

Figure 16 is a flowchart showing steps taken to dynamically generate a menu item;

Figure 17a is an example console interface created using information extracted from a management model;

Figure 17b is an example popup menu user interface created using information extracted from a management model; and

Figure 18 is a block diagram of an information handling
5 system capable of implementing the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The following is intended to provide a detailed description of an example of the invention and should not be taken to be limiting of the invention itself. Rather, any 5 number of variations may fall within the scope of the invention which is defined in the claims following the description.

Figure 1 is high level diagram of the overall process of providing console plug in files to customers. Software 10 manufacturing process 100 creates distributable media that is sent to customers for installation. Management definition object 105 (e.g., a MOF file) includes a management model, such as a CIM model that the software manufacturer wishes to distribute. The MOF file is used as input to the process. 15 While a MOF file is shown, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that other types of input streams that model a system could also be used as input. Before distributing the management system, the software manufacturer establishes product properties 110, which includes a list of 20 the management system consoles that will be supported by the software manufacturer. Product properties 110 may also include other options that are used when creating distributable media, such as a root object, a unique product identifier (in order to create names unique for each product), 25 and location of the MOF file that will be used.

Definition support files 115 include other files, such as national language support (NLS) files and graphical user

interface displays that are external to MOF 105 yet used to create the distributable media. Console plug in data 120 includes information about specific management system consoles. This data is used to create an interface, or plug-in, between the distributable media and one or more management system consoles (management system consoles are products such as Microsoft Management Console (MMC), the Tivoli Console by IBM, the AS/400 system console, and the AIX™ system console (WebSM™)).

10 Create distributable media 125 is a process that uses management definition object 105, product properties 110, definition support files 115, and console plug-in data 120 to create distributable media (for details regarding create distributable media process 125 see **Figure 2**). The result of
15 create distributable media process 125 is master media 130. Master media 130 is stored on a nonvolatile storage device, such as a hard drive, CD-R/RW, optical or magnetic storage, or nonvolatile memory. Replicate distribution media 135 is a process that replicates master media 130. The replication may
20 be onto another nonvolatile storage device, such as a CD-R/RW or other removable media, or the replication can be made into a data stream for transmitting to a customer. Send copy of media to customers 140 is a process that sends a replicated copy of the distribution media resulting from process 135 to
25 the customer. If a tangible, removable media is created, send process 140 may physically package the removable media and send product media 145 to the customer through the mail or other parcel service. On the other hand, if the media is a data stream, then send process 140 transmits the data stream

that includes the product to the customer through a computer network, such as the Internet, or using a modem that connects the software manufacturer's computer system to the customer's computer system.

5 Customer process 150 commences with the customer receiving the product and running a setup program included with the product (step 160). The receipt may be a tangible receipt of a removable nonvolatile storage device, such as a CD-R/RW disc, that is placed in a customer device, such as a
10 CD-ROM drive, in order to install the product. The receipt may also be by the receipt of a data stream over a computer network or modem connection through which the product data is stored on the customer's nonvolatile storage device, such as a hard drive or nonvolatile memory accessible by the customer's
15 computer system.

Executing the setup program included with the product allows the customer to select from one or more available consoles (step 170). The number of consoles the customer selects depends upon (i) the number of consoles for which the
20 software manufacturer enabled the product to interface (defined by product properties 110 and console plug-in data 120), and (ii) the number of consoles that the customer uses or plans to use. For example, if the software manufacturer enabled the product to be used with four consoles, those four
25 consoles would be selectable by the customer. If the customer has a particular console of choice, such as the Tivoli console, then he selects his preferred console and does not install plug-in files associated with the other consoles. The

selected console plug-in(s) are installed on the customer's computer system (step 180, see **Figure 6** for further customer installation details). The installed plug-in components are registered with the applicable consoles (step 190) so that the 5 consoles recognize the installed plug-in components and the installed product when used by the customer.

Figure 2 is a high level flowchart showing the overall process of creating distributable media including console plug in files based upon a management definition. Processing 10 commences at 200 whereupon the properties are read (step 205) from product properties data store 210. Management definition object 220, such as a MOF, is read and evaluated (step 215) to determine the panels, plug-in code, and NLS data needed to process. A graphical user interface is generated to support 15 the model (predefined process 225, see **Figures 8 and 9** for further processing details). The generated user interface panels are stored in panel files data store 230. In one embodiment, the panel files are created as Java and/or Extensible Markup Language (XML) files capable of being 20 rendered with browser software such as Microsoft Internet Explorer™ or Netscape Navigator™.

A default set of NLS translation templates are generated (predefined process 260, see **Figure 14** for further processing details). NLS templates 262 are used by translators during 25 translate step 265 in order to generate national language translations 268 that can be used to provide support for multiple languages.

A determination is made as to whether one or more of the automatically generated panels need to be modified (decision 235). If one or more panels need to be modified, decision 235 branches to "yes" branch 238 whereupon a user modifies the 5 panels (step 240) stored in panel files data store 230. On the other hand, if none of the automatically created panels need to be modified, decision 235 branches to "no" branch 242 bypassing panel modification steps.

Console plug-in data 250 includes information describing 10 interfaces to various consoles. This data is used to generate plug-in components that can operate with the selected consoles (predefined process 245, see **Figure 3** for further processing details). The generated plug-in components are stored in plug-in components data store 255 for eventual packaging.

15 When the panels have been created, the plug-in components have been created, and the translation strings have been translated into the desired languages, the plug-in components, panels, and languages are packaged (predefined process 270) and stored onto distributable media package 275 for eventual 20 distribution to customers. Note that predefined process 270 can be iteratively invoked. For example, a single-language version may be initially packaged. When translation is completed, other NLS versions can be created or a new version can be packaged that allows the customer to choose between the 25 various available languages. In addition, it will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that some processing and packaging is performed at an early stage (i.e., before the code is delivered to the customer) in order to improve

efficiency. It will be appreciated that many of the steps described above could be performed at runtime on the customer's computer system by reading the MOF file during runtime and processing the MOF file data accordingly. Create 5 distributable media processing subsequently ends at 295.

Figure 3 is a flowchart showing the process of creating console plug in files. Processing commences at 300 whereupon common code usable with all consoles is read (step 305) from common console code data store 310. The mapping model in the 10 management definition object (MOF) is transformed in order to generate GUI panels 330 and Editable NLS Files 340 in predefined process 325. Editable NLS Files 340 are generated for translation into one or more languages in order to support users' native languages. Editable NLS files 340 include text 15 needed for display on GUI panels 330, menu items, and nodes on the displayed tree control. In one embodiment, the editable NLS files include translatable strings that are used as input to a translation process whereby a program and/or a translation specialist translates the translatable strings 20 into the desired languages. GUI panels 330 are panels created with specifications for the layout of the GUI panels.

The first console for which plug-in components will be generated is selected (step 345) from product properties data store 390. Specific runtime algorithms that apply to the 25 selected console are read (step 350) from specific console runtime algorithms data store 355. The generated console plug-in component is compiled into an executable entity (step 360) that is able to use the mapping model from the management

definition object (MOF) and interface with the selected console. The resulting executable entity is stored in executable plug-in components data store 365 for eventual packaging and distribution to a customer.

5 A determination is made as to whether there are more consoles for which executable plug-in components are needed (decision 370). If there are more consoles, decision 370 branches to "yes" branch 375 whereupon the next console is selected (step 380) from product properties data store 390 and
10 processing loops back to process the selected console. This looping continues until there are no more consoles to process, at which point decision 370 branches to "no" branch 385 and processing ends at 395.

Figure 4 is a high level diagram of a management model
15 (e.g., a MOF file) being loaded into a management object repository and service. Management data object 400 is a MOF file or data stream that includes a formal definition of the management model (e.g., a CIM model). The management data object 400 can contain extensive information about the
20 management model, however the various types of data are often difficult to ascertain from the raw management data object. In order to process the management data object, transformation engine 410 creates a structured representation of various aspects of the management data object. Transformation engine
25 410 is a parser that reads MOF file 400 and feeds the data to a Common Information Model Object Manager (CIMOM) that is being used. Generally, the transformation engine and CIMOM are packaged together. It will be appreciated by those

skilled in the art that the steps described herein can be performed with any variety of CIMOMs and transformation engines. To ensure compatibility with multiple CIMOMs and transformation engines, standard APIs specified in the CIM specification set forth by the Distributed Management Task Force, Inc. (DTMF) are used. All compliant CIMOMs conform to the standard APIs set forth in the CIM specification.

CIM Repository **425** (or "CIM-OM" for CIM Object Manager) receives data from transformation engine **410**. While CIM Repository **425** is shown as a system, it may include only certain types of management object data depending which models have been loaded into the CIM-OM at a given time. In one embodiment, a set of Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) is used to extract the data shown from a MOF that includes a CIM model. These APIs, called CIM Object Manager (CIM-OM) APIs are able to extract various information from a CIM-OM that includes a CIM model.

The various types of information extracted from management data object **400** and included in CIM Repository **425** include relationship information **430**, object properties information **440**, categories information **450**, product monitors information **460**, product methods and operations information **470**, life cycle information **475**, and national language support (NLS) information **490**.

Relationship information **430** includes information that can be used to display information in a tree control on a management console. For example, a root node may have zero, one, or more child nodes. The child nodes each describe a

different aspect, or subject, pertaining to the root nodes. Each of the child nodes also has zero, one, or more child nodes ("grandchildren" of the root node), which include more detailed information pertaining to their parent. These 5 relationships and tree levels can be quite deep and include large quantities of information pertaining to the management data object. See **Figures 10-12** for further details regarding tree node processing.

Returning to **Figure 4**, object properties information 440 10 include information about the various objects included in the management data object. Object properties may include the object's name, data type, and other information that pertains to individual objects. Object properties include data element names that correspond to the object. In addition, object 15 properties also include qualifiers that are used to group one or more data elements. Other object properties may specify valid data types and values that correspond with one or more data elements, as well as list items that are used to allow the user to select from a list of valid values. These 20 qualifiers, data element names, and data element attributes are used to display GUI panels from a management console allowing a user to view and manipulate values associated with the product (see **Figure 9** for an example GUI panel). Examples 25 of properties include caption, description, node name, states (e.g., started, stopped), modes (e.g., Start Mode), and the names of parameters to a particular method. Property names are usually designated by designers of the CIM model, rather than being fixed or predetermined.

Category information **450** includes categorical information that pertains to the management data object. Examples of categories include Identification, Configuration Setting, Consumption, Status, Activity, and Unknown.

5 Product monitors information **460** include information used to monitor the management system described by the management data object. These monitors are used to gather information about the management system and display it to a user that is using a management console.

10 Product methods and operations information **470** include method and operation information about objects that are used to start the object, stop the object, add a new object, delete an instance of an object, etc. A user makes requests regarding objects displayed on a management console, such as 15 in a tree view. Menus are dynamically created that allow the user to perform operations (start, stop, add, etc.) with the object. The identified methods are used to perform the operation requested by the user.

20 Lifecycle information **475** includes information regarding an object's current status that determine what operations can be performed against the object at a given point in time. For example, an object that is already started may be stopped but cannot be created because it has already been created. Other rules may be included in lifecycle information **475** so, for 25 example, a given object, once it is started, may have to be stopped before it can be deleted.

National language support (NLS) information **490** includes information for accessing national language support data when enabled. National language support provides translated strings that are included on display panels in order to convey information to the user in a language of the user's choice. **5** NLS information may include the various languages that are supported as well as information identifying the name and location of files that include the translated strings.

Figure 5 is a high level diagram of a console plug in **10** builder being used to generate plug in data for a variety of consoles. In the example shown, several different products each have a management data object file associated with them (MOF **505** for Product A, MOF **510** for Product B, MOF **515** for Product C, and MOF **520** for Product n).

15 Console Plug-In Builder **500** processes the MOF files corresponding to the various products and creates plug-in components for various management consoles. Each product can be used to generate plug-in files for one or more of the available management consoles. For example, Product A **505** may **20** be processed by Console Plug-In Builder **500** to create plug-in components (Product A files **530**) for all available consoles (in the example shown, the available consoles include Tivoli Console **575**, AS/400 Console **580**, Microsoft Management Console **585**, and WebSM™ Console **590**). On the other hand, Product B **25** **510** may be processed in order to create plug-in components (Product B files **540**) for Tivoli Console **575**, AS/400 Console **580**, and WebSM Console **590**. Product C **515** and Product n **520**

may also be processed to create plug-in components (Product C files 550 and Product n files 560) for all available consoles.

When a user installs the various products, a display is provided to allow the user to select which of the available 5 management consoles the user wishes to use. If the user wishes to use the Tivoli Console, then plug-in components for Tivoli Console 575 are processed to interact with the Tivoli Console that is available on the user's computer system. In the example described above for Product A where plug-in 10 components for four system consoles were created, the user can select which of the four consoles he wishes to use. The user may select to install the plug-in components for Tivoli Console 575 and Microsoft Management Console 585, in which case the selected console plug-in components are installed 15 from plug-in components for Tivoli 575 and plug-in components for MMC 585. **Figure 6** includes details regarding the customer plug-in installation process.

Figure 6 is a flowchart showing the customer installation process for installing plug in code for selected consoles. 20 Processing commences at 600 whereupon the customer loads product media 610 (step 605) and runs a setup program associated with the product (step 620). Product media may be a removable media, such as a removable optical or magnetic storage media, such as a floppy disk or CD-R/RW disc, or may 25 be a stream of data transmitted from a software distribution center, such as a file transmitted over a computer network or included as an email attachment.

Upon running the setup program, the setup program displays a list of available consoles (step 630) with which the product can interface. The list of available consoles depends upon which consoles the software manufacturer selected 5 when performing console builder operations (see **Figure 5** for further details). The list of available consoles is displayed in display panel 640. In the example shown in display panel 640, the product that the customer is installing has plug-in components that allow the product to operate with the Tivoli 10 Console, the AS/400 Console, the Microsoft Management Console (MMC), and the WebSM Console. The customer selects one or more of the available consoles depending upon the consoles available on the customer's system or those consoles the customer is planning to install. In the example shown, the 15 customer has selected the Tivoli Console and the Microsoft Management Console. When the customer is finished with his selections, he presses "OK" whereupon the setup program receives the customer's selections (step 650).

The first console that was selected by the customer is 20 processed (step 660) whereby console files located on product media 610 are loaded onto the customer's computer system. After the console plug-in components are loaded onto the customer's computer system, APIs corresponding to the installed plug-in components are registered with the console 25 (step 670) so that the console is able to invoke the plug-in components and interface with plug-in component data.

A determination is made as to whether there are more consoles that the customer selected (decision 675). If there

are more selected consoles that need to be processed, decision 675 branches to "yes" branch 680 which loops back to process the next selected console (step 685) by installing the console plug-in components and register the console plug-in components with the console. This looping continues until there are no more selected consoles, at which point decision 675 branches to "no" branch 690 and processing ends at 695.

Figure 7 is a flowchart showing customer console processes performed after plug in code installation. 10 Processing commences at 700 whereupon a user starts a management console for which plug-in components have previously been installed (step 705). The console interface is displayed (step 710) to the user which shows information pertaining to one or more products, information for which can 15 be viewed and manipulated from the console.

A selection is received from the user (step 715). A determination is made as to whether the user requested to end console processing (decision 720). If the user requested to end console processing, decision 720 branches to "yes" branch 20 790 whereupon the console is stopped and processing ends at 795. On the other hand, if the user's request is not to end console execution, decision 720 branches to "no" branch 722 in order to process the user's request.

A determination is made as to whether the user has 25 selected to navigate the tree control displayed on the management console (decision 725). If the user selected navigation of the tree control, decision 725 branches to "yes" branch 728 whereupon tree navigation is performed (step 730)

and processing loops back to receive the next user selection. On the other hand, if the user did not select navigation of the tree control, decision 725 branches to "no" branch 732 to identify and process the user's selection.

5 A determination is made as to whether the user has requested a menu (i.e., a popup menu) from the management console (decision 735). If the user selected a menu, decision 735 branches to "yes" branch 738 whereupon the selected menu is displayed (step 740) and processing loops back to receive 10 the next user selection. On the other hand, if the user did not select a menu, decision 735 branches to "no" branch 745 to identify and process the user's selection.

A determination is made as to whether the user has requested a menu selection (i.e., a selection from a popup menu) from the management console (decision 750). If the user 15 did not select a menu selection, decision 750 branches to "no" branch 752 which loops back to identify and process the next user selection. On the other hand, if the user did select a menu selection, decision 750 branches to "yes" branch 758 to 20 process the user's menu selection. Another determination is made as to whether more information is needed in order to process the user's selection (decision 760). If more information is needed, decision 760 branches to "yes" branch 765 whereupon a GUI panel is displayed and additional 25 information is received in order to process the selection (step 770). In addition, step 770 may also communicate with the product's service provider, as shown, to obtain information included in the GUI panels. If no more

information is needed, decision 760 branches to "no" branch 772 bypassing the generation and display of additional GUI panels.

The user's menu selection is executed (step 775).

5 Execution of the user's menu selection may include backend processing with a service supplied by the product being administered by the management console session (step 780). For example, if the user chose a method to execute, a request is sent to the product's service provider requesting that the 10 method be executed. The service provider executes the method on the product and returns the results for display to the user. For instance, if the user chooses to 'drop' a selected DB/2 database table, the DB/2 service provider is sent a request to drop the selected table. The actual dropping of 15 the table is done by the service provider. The product returns the requested information and the information is displayed on the user's display, such as information retrieved and displayed in a popup menu. Processing loops back (loop 785) to process the next user selection. This looping 20 continues until the user selects to end the console process, at which time decision 720 branches to "yes" branch 790 and processing ends at 795.

Figure 8 is a high level diagram of data layers including a management data layer (800), a console data layer, and the 25 generated generic integration data layer (820). Management data layer includes the CIM model (MOF) or pseudo code that describes the management system. Definition object 810 is a

file or object that includes the CIM model or pseudo code describing the management system.

Generic integration layer 820 includes generic representations of the management data. Transformation engine process 825 processes the CIM model or pseudo code to create formatted management data structure 830. In a CIM implementation, a variety of available APIs are used to transform the CIM model into a formatted representation (see **Figure 4** for details regarding the formatted representation). Translation engine process 840 is used to process formatted management data structure 830 to create generic constructs 850 that are independent of any specific console. Generic GUI constructs 850 include both display and processing constructs. In one embodiment, the display constructs include graphical user interface (GUI) panels in a generic format, such as using Java or extensible markup language (XML) that can be processed on a variety of computer systems irrespective of the operating environment, or operating system, used by the computer system.

Specific console display layer 860 manages the display and behavior of the management data on a specific console. Console plug-in builder process 870 processes generic constructs 850 to create specific plug-in components 875 that are built for a specific console. Application programming interfaces (APIs) used to invoke the specific plug-in components are registered with specific console application 880 so that the display and processing constructs included with the plug-in components are accessible from the specific console application. The user executes specific console

application 880 whereby management data is displayed and manipulated by the user on console display 890 (see **Figure 9** for further details regarding display and handling of registered plug-in components).

5 **Figure 9** is a high level diagram showing a GUI display panel derived from a CIM model. The user executes a specific console with which plug-in components have been installed and registered for a management system product. The specific console, such as the Tivoli console, the Microsoft Management 10 Console (MMC), etc., receives various user requests (process 900). Some of these requests correspond to the management system product that was installed and for which APIs 910 were registered with the console. APIs 910 provide a conduit between the console and plug-in components, such as display 15 panels and processing logic. The registered APIs 910 invoke registered plug-in components 920 that handle display of display panels, such as display panel 930, that allows the user to view and manipulate data corresponding to the management system product.

20 Display panel 930 includes a number of display attributes that were originally derived from the management definition object written for the management system product. Display 930 shows a number of menu tabs 940 used as containers in order to group management data. Qualifier names from the management 25 definition object are used to create tab values displayed on menu tabs 940. In one embodiment, qualifiers named "category" are used to form the tab values. In addition, if national language support (NLS) is being used, the values of qualifier

names 940 are retrieved from translated strings within NLS data files.

5 Data element names 980 are displayed on display panel 930 within a given qualifier located within the management data object. If national language support is being used, data element names 980 are retrieved from translated strings within NLS data files. Values associated with the various data elements are displayed in text boxes 950 and list boxes 960. Data displayed in text boxes and list boxes is retrieved from 10 the management information system. If permitted by the management information system, the user can manipulate the values. The extent that the user can change values can also be set by the management data object so that minimum, maximum values, data types (i.e., integer, numeric, alphanumeric, 15 etc.) can be enforced as well as valid values (i.e., numeric value from 0 to 5). List boxes 960 retrieve list elements from the management data object. The list elements display the valid values from which the user can select. The user can select a different tab label (940) to view and manipulate the 20 data elements and values that correspond to other qualifier values.

25 In addition, data from external data sources 970 can be retrieved from the management data system (e.g., from a database or other data store). In many cases, the product being administered is the provider of external data sources 970. For example, display panel 930 may show details of certain product status information. In such a case, external data sources 970 might be used to display status information

related to the product being administered. Details regarding external data sources **970** is defined in the management data object. In this manner, dynamic data that represents operations currently taking place in the computer system can 5 be displayed and manipulated through display **930**.

Figure 10 is a flowchart showing the processing of management data in order to create a tree view displayable on a console. Processing commences at **1000** whereupon a root class is identified (step **1005**). The root class can be 10 identified by using a naming convention to define the class in the management definition object (i.e., in the MOF). The root class can also be identified by prompting the developer for the root class name.

There are two variations of this process, one is runtime, 15 the other is used to make a one time traversal of the tree. The one time traversal is not necessary unless preprocessing is desired where NLS strings, dialogs, menus, helper code etc are generated at build time and then made available at run time. This root class (and any subclasses) are processed (step 20 **1010**). All associations that include the current class are identified (step **1015**). An association as defined in CIM includes linkages between classes or instances of classes. These linkages are called Roles. Each role has a name and a class type as well as other qualifiers. One of the potential 25 qualifiers used in this algorithm is the **WEAK** qualifier. The first identified association is processed (step **1020**). A determination is made as to whether the source instance is weak (decision **1025**). Again, "Weak" is a CIM definition used

to describe a relationship. The weak part of an association is identified by the "WEAK" qualifier. Part of the definition of WEAK is that the weak object does not exist without the other object in the association. For example, Database Tables usually only exist inside a database. This association is checked to ensure that the Source class is not contained by the target class. Only associations where the Source class contains the target class (or associations where there is no containment) are followed for tree node processing. If the source instance is weak, processing ignores this association. In this case, decision 1025 branches to "yes" branch 1078 whereupon another decision is made as to whether there are more associations to process (decision 1080). If there are more associations, decision 1080 branches to "yes" branch 1085 whereupon processing loops back to handle the next association (1090). This looping continues until there are no more associations, at which point decision 1080 branches to "no" branch 1092 and processing ends at 1095. However, if one-time traversal is being used, a record is kept for each target class that was processed. This list of target classes is then compared at this time to a list of classes processed as the root class. All those not having already been processed as a root are now processed, and the list of processed classes is updated.

Returning to decision 1025, if the source class is not weak, decision 1025 branches to "no" branch 1028 to further process the association. A determination is made as to whether the association is a complex or a simple association (decision 1030). If the association is a complex association,

decision 1030 branches to "yes" branch 1035. A complex association is one in which there are three or more classes in the association or an association between a class and itself. For example, groups can contain groups, so this would be a 5 complex association. The complex association uses a tree model where the nodes in the tree represent the Association Name, a sub-node for each Role in the association, and finally nodes for instances of each class to which the Role points (predefined process 1040). A determination is made as to 10 whether there is a loopback reference (decision 1050). A loopback reference is where a class is associated to itself as in the "group" example described above. A particular group can both be in a group, and, contain other groups. Because of 15 these possibilities, all the Roles of the association are displayed, and thus the reason for decision 1050. If there is a loopback reference, decision 1050 branches to "yes" branch 1052 whereupon the reference/role that matches the source class is displayed (step 1055). If there is not a loopback reference, decision 1050 branches to "no" branch 1062 20 bypassing loopback reference processing.

Returning to decision 1030, if the association is a simple association (rather than a complex association described above), decision 1030 branches to "no" branch 1055. The simple association is recorded and organized by target 25 class (step 1060). A decision is made as to whether there are more associations to process (decision 1080). If there are more association, decision 1080 branches to "yes" branch 1085 whereupon processing loops back to handle the next association (1090). This looping continues until there are no more

associations, at which point decision 1080 branches to "no" branch 1092 whereupon simple associations are processed (predefined process 1094, see **Figure 11** for further details) and processing ends at 1095.

5 **Figure 11** is a flowchart showing tree view processing of a simple association found in the management data. Processing varies depending upon whether the simple associations are being processed prior to runtime (i.e., a onetime pass) or during runtime. If processing takes place during runtime, 10 instances of the various classes are processed. In addition, during a onetime pass there may be the possibility of an association to a class, however there are no instances of the association until runtime.

Processing commences at 1100 whereupon the first target 15 class is identified for the association (step 1105). The number of associations to the target class is calculated (step 1110). The number of association can be calculated by incrementing the number of association for the given class. A determination is made as to whether there are more target 20 classes (decision 1120). If there are more target classes, decision 1120 branches to "yes" branch 1122 which identifies the next target class (step 1125) and loops back to process the next target class. This looping continues until there are no more target classes, at which point decision 1120 branches 25 to "no" branch 1128 (i.e., the number of associations to each target class has now been calculated).

The first target class is processed (step 1130). A determination is made as to whether there is only one

association to the target class (decision 1140). If there is only one association to the target class (i.e., class.association = 1), then decision 1140 branches to "yes" branch 1145 whereupon the target class refers to the last 5 association (step 1150). In this case, a Node is added to the display tree representing the class. Any instances of the class are then added as nodes below this "class node."

On the other hand, if there is more than one association to the target class, decision 1140 branches to "no" branch 10 1155 whereupon the tree representation uses a class node (step 1160). Association nodes are added to the class module. Each association node contains the appropriate Role Nodes. Instance nodes of the classes are added under each Role node. The Role Node for the source class is not added.

15 A determination is made as to whether there are more target classes to process (decision 1180). If there are more target classes to process, decision 1180 branches to "yes" branch 1185 which retrieves the next target class (step 1190) and loops back to process the next target class. This looping 20 continues until there are no more target classes to process, at which point decision 1180 branches to "no" branch 1192 and processing ends at 1195.

Figure 12 is a flowchart showing processing steps taken to process an individual tree node. Processing commences at 25 1200 whereupon a display name is determined for the node (predefined processing step 1205, see Figure 15 for further details on determining display names). If the management system is enabled for national language support, the

translated display names and menu item names are retrieved from NLS files. The various methods (i.e., add, delete, etc.) that are included in the menu are processed.

5 A determination is made as to whether it is possible to create other objects from this node (decision 1206). If it is possible to create other objects from this node, decision 1206 branches to "yes" branch 1207 whereupon the create menu options are included (step 1208) (i.e., the creatable menu items include the class of the source node itself, and any of 10 its subclasses, etc.) and the creation method is included in the node's popup menu (step 1209). On the other hand, if it is not possible to create other objects from this node,, decision 1206 branches to "no" branch 1210 bypassing the creation steps.

15 A determination is made as to whether there are any methods that should be included in the node's popup menu (decision 1211). If there are no methods, decision 1211 branches to "no" branch 1212 bypassing the method inclusion steps. On the other hand, if there are methods to include, 20 decision 1211 branches to "yes" branch 1214 whereupon the first method in the menu is identified (step 1215) and included in the popup menu (step 1220). The methods are retrieved from the management model (e.g., MOF file). A determination is made as to whether there are more methods to 25 include in the menu (decision 1225). If there are more methods in the menu, decision 1225 branches to "yes" branch 1230 which loops back to identify the next method in the menu (step 1235) and include the identified method in the popup

menu (step 1220). This looping continues until there are no more methods to include in the popup menu, at which point decision 1225 branches to "no" branch 1240.

Another determination is made as to whether it is 5 possible to delete nodes from the current node (decision 1270). If it is possible to delete nodes from the current node, decision 1270 branches to "yes" branch 1275 whereupon a class/association is determined for the deletion method (step 1280), and the deletion method is included in the popup menu 10 (step 1285). On the other hand, if it is not possible to delete nodes from the current node, decision 1270 branches to "no" branch 1290 bypassing the deletion steps. Tree node processing subsequently ends at 1295.

Figure 13 is a diagram showing the process of creating 15 various packaging files to support a management model. Managed object format (MOF) file 1310 is processed by plug-in builder process 1320 to create generated plug-in files 1350. In addition, NLS data 1330 includes translated strings used to provide national language support.

20 Generated plug-in files 1350 may include one or more containers, such as a directory or package file (i.e., a "zip" file or a Java "jar" file) that contains multiple files. In the example shown, generated plug-in files 1350 include First Jar 1360, Second Jar 1370, and Other Jar(s) 1380. Each of the 25 Jar files include a number of generated plug-in files that can be installed by a user to support various processing. For example, First Jar 1360 may be configured to support a particular type of installation, for example a Tivoli

Enterprise Console installation, and Second Jar 1370 may be configured to support another type of installation, for example a Microsoft Management Console (MMC) installation. Other Jar(s) 1380 may be configured to support other consoles 5 or other types of installations.

Each Jar includes a number of different types of files, or objects. For example, each Jar can include a subdirectory that includes a number of executable files, another subdirectory that includes a number of dynamically linked 10 libraries (DLLs), as well as other subdirectories that include text (including translated strings for NLS support), bitmaps, and other types of files. Generated plug-in files 1350 may be stored on a distributable media, such as a removable nonvolatile storage media, for distribution to a customer. 15 Generated plug-in files 1350 may also be transmitted electronically through a computer network or other telecommunications means to a customer. The customer then uses generated plug in files to select desired installation options. Depending on the customer's chosen installation 20 options, one or more Jars included in the generated plug-in files will be used to install plug-in files

Figure 14 is a high level diagram showing national language support files being translated and packaged into country-specific run time libraries. Management definition 25 file 1400, such as a CIM management object format (MOF) file is processed by translatable strings analysis process 1410 to extract translatable strings from the object model file.

One or more translation templates 1415 are prepared depending upon the number of language translations included in the CIM model. A determination is made as to whether translation will be performed for other languages (decision 5 1420). If there will be no translations, then translation templates are optionally used and processing branches to "no" branch 1422 and processing continues at 1450. On the other hand, if the developers of the product wish to perform additional translations, decision 1420 branches to "yes" 10 branch 1428 whereupon a translation process is performed (process 1430). During the translation process, the translation templates are used by translators to create translated strings in various languages. The various language translations are stored in various files. In the example 15 shown, the translated national language support (NLS) files include translated files for country A 1435, country B 1440, and country C 1445. In addition, the CIM specification allows for translated strings to exist inline within MOF file 1400. These were extracted from the CIM model to create a language 20 template for each language found in the model.

Generate runtime files process 1450 is used to create runtime files using the logic found in MOF file 1400 along with the translated strings found in NLS files (1435, 1440, and 1445) as well as potential translated strings found in MOF 25 file 1400. A determination is made as to whether separate runtime files are needed for the various national language (decision 1460). In some cases separate runtime files are not needed for each country. In this case, decision 1460 branches to "no" branch 1465 and the translated files are added to a

common file, such as Java resource bundle 1470, which includes translations for all countries. In other cases, separate files are needed for each country. In this case, decision 1460 branches to "yes" branch 1472 whereupon separate runtime files are created for each country (runtime files for country A 1475, country B 1480, and country C 1490). When a customer installs the generated plug-in files he can now choose a national language from among the supported languages so that the national language of choice is used to display menus and other display panels to the user. The national language items for display will then either be pulled from a common resource bundle (i.e., Resource Bundle 1470), or from a runtime package that includes the selected language (i.e., runtime files for country A 1475, country B 1480, and country C 1490).

15 **Figure 15** is a flowchart showing steps taken to derive display names from information included in the management data file. Processing commences at 1500 whereupon element request 1504 is received (step 1505) from caller 1502. A determination is made as to whether the element is an instance element (decision 1515). If the element is not an instance element, decision 1515 branches to "no" branch 1518 whereupon a determination is made as to whether the element includes a qualifier that defines the display name, in other words a qualifier of "DisplayName" (decision 1520).

25 If the element does include a predefined display name qualifier, decision 1520 branches to "yes" branch 1525 whereupon the appropriate NLS'd version of the display name qualifier from the CIM is used for the display name. On the

other hand, if the predefined display name qualifier is not found, decision 1520 branches to "no" branch 1535 whereupon the appropriate NLS'd version of the CIM element name is used as the display name (step 1540).

5 To retrieve the appropriate NLS'd version of the display name (in each applicable process described herein), the system checks whether the CIMOM (CIM Object Manager) has a language translation for the name actually embedded in the CIM. If this is found, then the embedded name is used. If this is not 10 found, then the NLS files are checked to see if the name is included for the appropriate language. If the name is included in an NLS file, the name found in the NLS file is used, otherwise the default version of the name is used.

15 Returning to decision 1515, if the element is an instance element, decision 1515 branches to "yes" branch 1548 whereupon a determination is made as to whether the instance element includes a qualifier that defines the display name, in other words qualifier of "DisplayName" (decision 1550).

20 If the element does include a display name qualifier, decision 1550 branches to "yes" branch 1555 whereupon the NLS'd version of the display name qualifier is used for the display name. On the other hand, if there is no display name qualifier, decision 1550 branches to "no" branch 1565 whereupon a determination is made as to whether there are more 25 than one non-propagated key properties (decision 1570). If there are more than one non-propagated key properties, decision 1570 branches to "yes" branch 1572 whereupon the display name is constructed from each non-propagated key (step

1575). A key property is part of a larger identifier that is used to uniquely identify an element. A non-propagated key value means that the particular value is not being passed down from a parent object to the element. The construction of the 5 display name is performed by specifying the national language translated string corresponding to the key property name followed by an equal sign ("=") which is followed by the value of the property with commas separating the name/value pairs from one another. For example, in a database example with 10 more than one database and table being used, a constructed display names may appear as "Database=Sales,Table=Expenses" and "Database=Products,Table=Catalog." On the other hand, if there is not more than one non-propagated key property, decision 1570 branches to "no" branch 1578 whereupon the value 15 of the property (e.g. "Expenses") is used as the display name (step 1580).

After the element has been processed and the appropriate name has been retrieved as described above, the retrieved display name is returned (step 1585) to caller 1502 through 20 element response 1590. Processing subsequently ends at 1595.

Figure 16 is a flowchart showing steps taken to generate an array of menu item for a tree node. Processing commences at 1600 whereupon the menu item is analyzed (step 1604).

A determination is made as to whether the tree node is an 25 instance of an object (decision 1608). If it is an instance of an object, decision 1608 branches to "yes" branch 1610 whereupon a list of methods corresponding to the tree node are

retrieved (step 1612). The tree node methods may be retrieved from a managed object format (MOF) file.

A determination is made as to whether there are methods to process corresponding to the tree node (decision 1616). If 5 there are methods to process, decision 1616 branches to "yes" branch 1618 to process one of the methods. A generated display name is retrieved for the method. If there is a translated name for the method name, the translated name is retrieved (step 1620) from either the MOF file or from a 10 separate translation file that includes translation strings for one or more languages. A menu item is created (step 1624) for the method using the retrieved method display name (obtained at step 1620). The menu item type is set to "method" (step 1628) indicating that the method item 15 corresponds to an executable "method." The menu item and menu item type are added to the menu's array for the tree node (step 1632). Processing loops back (loop 1634) to determine whether there are additional methods to process (decision 1616). This looping continues until there are no more methods 20 to process, at which time decision 1616 branches to "no" branch 1636.

After all methods for the tree node have been processed and decision 1616 branches to "no" branch 1636, a menu item for a "delete" function is created (step 1640). The created 25 delete menu item is added to the array corresponding to the tree node (step 1644). A menu item is also created for a "properties" function (step 1648). The created properties function menu item is also added to the array corresponding to

the tree node (step 1652). Processing subsequently ends at 1699.

Returning to decision 1608, if the tree node is not an instance of an object, decision 1608 branches to "no" branch 1654. A list of creatable items is created from information included in the MOF file (step 1656, see **Figure 18** for further details. A determination is made as to whether the list is empty indicating that the node has no creatable items (decision 1660). If the list is empty, decision 1660 branches to "yes" branch 1661 bypassing steps taken to process creatable items, whereupon an "add" item is created for the tree menu (step 1696) along with a "remove" item (step 1698) before processing ends at 1699.

On the other hand, if the list of creatable items is not empty, decision 1660 branches to "no" branch 1662 in order to process the list of creatable items. A determination is made as to whether there are more creatable items to process (decision 1668). If there are more creatable items to process, decision 1668 branches to "yes" 1670 to process the next creatable item. A display name is retrieved corresponding to the object that can be created from the tree node (step 1672). A translated version of the display name is retrieved from either a MOF file or a separate translation file if such a translation exists. An object class corresponding to the item that can be created is retrieved from the MOF file (step 1676). A menu item is created using the retrieved display name and the retrieved creation class (step 1680). The menu item is added to an array corresponding

to the tree node for creatable items (step 1684). Processing loops back (loop 1686) to process the next creatable item. This looping continues until there are no more creatable items to process, at which time decision 1668 branches to "no" 5 branch 1688. The create menu includes the creation of objects that are "weak" in the association, as well as all subclasses of that object.

A menu item is created for a "New" function that can be performed from the tree node (step 1690). The array of 10 creatable items that was created (see step 1684) is attached to the "New" menu item (step 1692) so that a user can select "New" from a context menu corresponding to the tree node and select from the list of creatable items that appear after the "New" function is selected. The "New" menu item is attached 15 to the tree menu array. In addition, an "Add" menu item is created for the tree menu (step 1696) along with a "Remove" menu item (step 1698) before processing ends at 1699.

Figure 17a is an example console interface created using information extracted from a management model. Display screen 20 1700 includes a title bar, pull down menus, tree view control 1710, and object window 1720. Tree view control 1710 includes information extracted from a management data model, such as a MOF. In the example shown, menu item 1730 has been selected corresponding to the "SAMPLE" database. The available 25 databases are also shown in object window 1720. Object window 1720 includes reference 1725 to the "SAMPLE" database.

Tree view 1710 shows various details regarding the products being administered by the console. For example, the

selected SAMPLE database is shown to be an instance of "Databases" which is shown to be included in the "DB2" database product. "DB2" is in turn contained by "Database Manager" which could include other database managers, such as 5 LDAP and IMS. The "Database Manager" is contained by the "IBM Database Sample."

Other nodes are shown to be contained by the SAMPLE database. For example, SAMPLE database 1730 includes database tables 1735 (table 1 and table 2). The SAMPLE database also includes database views 1740 (view 1 and view 2).

The selection of menu item 1730 prompts the display of popup menu 1750 shown in **Figure 17b**. Selection of menu item can be performed by a user clicking on the item with a mouse. Some systems use an alternative mouse click (i.e., a right button click) to display context sensitive popup menus. In addition, some systems allow a user to hold a mouse cursor over an item for a period of time whereupon the context menu is displayed. Furthermore, alternative selection means, such as with a keyboard, are also provided.

20 A variety of options to perform against the selected menu item are included in popup menu 1750. Some of these options are included with the particular console being used. For example, menu items 1760 includes console menu items that appear for nodes shown within the console. Other items are 25 context specific, such as menu items 1770. Each of the context specific menu items can be performed against the selected "SAMPLE" database. The context menu items are

therefore database specific. For example, if the user wishes to view the properties for the SAMPLE database he selects "Properties" menu item within menu item group 1770. Additional popup menu items may include "Help" menu item 1780 to display help (either specific to the selected database or more general help pertaining to the console), as well as "Properties" menu item 1790 that provides more general properties that pertain to the console, rather than properties that pertain to the selected SAMPLE database.

Figure 18 illustrates information handling system 1801 which is a simplified example of a computer system capable of performing the present invention. Computer system 1801 includes processor 1800 which is coupled to host bus 1805. A level two (L2) cache memory 1810 is also coupled to the host bus 1805. Host-to-PCI bridge 1815 is coupled to main memory 1820, includes cache memory and main memory control functions, and provides bus control to handle transfers among PCI bus 1825, processor 1800, L2 cache 1810, main memory 1820, and host bus 1805. PCI bus 1825 provides an interface for a variety of devices including, for example, LAN card 1830. PCI-to-ISA bridge 1835 provides bus control to handle transfers between PCI bus 1825 and ISA bus 1840, universal serial bus (USB) functionality 1845, IDE device functionality 1850, power management functionality 1855, and can include other functional elements not shown, such as a real-time clock (RTC), DMA control, interrupt support, and system management bus support. Peripheral devices and input/output (I/O) devices can be attached to various interfaces 1860 (e.g.,

parallel interface 1862, serial interface 1864, infrared (IR) interface 1866, keyboard interface 1868, mouse interface 1870, and fixed disk (FDD) 1872) coupled to ISA bus 1840. Alternatively, many I/O devices can be accommodated by a super 5 I/O controller (not shown) attached to ISA bus 1840.

BIOS 1880 is coupled to ISA bus 1840, and incorporates the necessary processor executable code for a variety of low-level system functions and system boot functions. BIOS 1880 can be stored in any computer readable medium, including 10 magnetic storage media, optical storage media, flash memory, random access memory, read only memory, and communications media conveying signals encoding the instructions (e.g., signals from a network). In order to attach computer system 1801 another computer system to copy files over a network, LAN 15 card 1830 is coupled to PCI-to-ISA bridge 1835. Similarly, to connect computer system 1801 to an ISP to connect to the Internet using a telephone line connection, modem 1875 is connected to serial port 1864 and PCI-to-ISA Bridge 1835.

While the computer system described in Figure 18 is 20 capable of executing the invention described herein, this computer system is simply one example of a computer system. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that many other computer system designs are capable of performing the copying process described herein.

25 One of the preferred implementations of the invention is an application, namely, a set of instructions (program code) in a code module which may, for example, be resident in the

random access memory of the computer. Until required by the computer, the set of instructions may be stored in another computer memory, for example, in a hard disk drive, or in a removable memory such as an optical disk (for eventual use in a CD ROM) or floppy disk (for eventual use in a floppy disk drive), or downloaded via the Internet or other computer network. Thus, the present invention may be implemented as a computer program product for use in a computer. In addition, although the various methods described are conveniently implemented in a general purpose computer selectively activated or reconfigured by software, one of ordinary skill in the art would also recognize that such methods may be carried out in hardware, in firmware, or in more specialized apparatus constructed to perform the required method steps.

While particular embodiments of the present invention have been shown and described, it will be obvious to those skilled in the art that, based upon the teachings herein, changes and modifications may be made without departing from this invention and its broader aspects and, therefore, the appended claims are to encompass within their scope all such changes and modifications as are within the true spirit and scope of this invention. Furthermore, it is to be understood that the invention is solely defined by the appended claims. It will be understood by those with skill in the art that a specific number of an introduced claim element is intended, such intent will be explicitly recited in the claim, and in the absence of such recitation no such limitation is present. For non-limiting example, as an aid to understanding, the

following appended claims contain usage of the introductory phrases "at least one" and "one or more" to introduce claim elements. However, the use of such phrases should not be construed to imply that the introduction of a claim element by 5 the indefinite articles "a" or "an" limits any particular claim containing such introduced claim element to inventions containing only one such element, even when the same claim includes the introductory phrases "one or more" or "at least one" and indefinite articles such as "a" or "an"; the same 10 holds true for the use in the claims of definite articles.